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were greatly prized by the Assyrians. This love for wines probably gave the Prophet Nahum opportunity to reproach the Ninevites with drunkenness.

They were the most cruel nation of antiquity. Without a trace of shame they picture their butcheries on the walls of their palaces. Maiming was the lightest cruelty. The sweetest revenge was to flay an enemy alive, and nail his skin to the city wall. Impalement was also a favorite torture, and when the king is merry in the garden with his spouse, the heads of his conquered enemies are hung up before his eyes. While the impartial historian can only express abhorrence at these barbarities, it must be remembered that all Semites were cruel and revengeful, and their successors, the Persians, and even western nations, considered no punishment too severe to suppress insurrection against the national god.

[To be continued.]

OLD TESTAMENT WORD-STUDIES: 5. DIVINE LAW.

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The human spirit stands in close and dependent relation to the divine, which is not only the source of life but also the source of law. In the present group of words we consider those which express in one form or another the idea of divine will, justice, wisdom, and love entering into the sphere of human relations as fundamental principles of conduct, controlling, directing, guiding a sinful and estranged humanity from the pains and penalties of sin unto a restoration of the union and fellowship with God wherein man realizes his true happiness and exalted destiny.

Dîn cause, judgment.

The verb *dîn* in the majority of its occurrences refers to divine judicial interpositions; such, e. g., as when Jehovah vindicated the innocence of his maligned servants, Gen. 30:6; Ps. 7:8(9), pronounces sentence upon his people who have his law but fail to keep it, Ps. 50:4, or chastises heathen nations that have oppressed Israel, Gen. 15:14; Ps. 110:6. The substantive, however, which in the Aramaic of Daniel is used exclusively to denote a sentence proceeding from the divine tribunal, is used in biblical Hebrew only once in this sense, Ps. 76:8. In every other instance it denotes a judicial utterance emanating from human authority, Job 19:29; Esth. 1:13, and hence, by metonymy, the civil suits or disputed legal questions concerning which the parties interested sought to obtain favorable decisions, Ps. 140:12; Prov. 29:7. In its primary sense of ruling, this word points back to the time when judicial as well as governing functions were vested in the ruler or chief, as is still common in the East.

Dāth edict, law.

This word is characteristic of the latest biblical literature. From this it passes into the rabbinical writings where it is used in the general sense of law or religion. From the fact that no satisfactory Hebrew or Aramaic etymology has been discovered for it, and that the word suddenly became prominent during Israel's contact with Persia in the exilic and post-exilic periods, it has been inferred that the word

is of Persian origin, and may be traced to the passive participle of the verb *dâ*, denoting that which has been given, placed, fixed, hence a decree or law established by royal authority. This is the prevailing signification of the word in the Book of Esther. In Ezra and Daniel it includes also divine decrees; Ezra was a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, 7:12,21, and against Daniel no occasion could be found save concerning the law of his God, 6:5(6). One very remarkable exception to this very late use of the word occurs in the difficult passage, Deut. 33:2. Its presence in this early and pure Hebrew is not susceptible of explanation either on the traditional or the critical view of the origin of the book. Its presence here is possibly the result of a post-exilic corruption of the text, and this becomes the more probable in view of the LXX. reading, "upon his right hand his angels," instead of "at his right hand a fiery law unto them," 'ēsh dāth lāmô. Nor is it readily conceivable how such a corruption could have crept in through the error of a copyist.

Hôq, ḥuqqāh statute, ordinance.

The radicals *h q* form the basis of several verbs, such as *ḥāqāh*, *ḥāqāq*, which mean primarily to pierce, cut into, engrave, etc. The latter is used in Isa. 22:16 to designate the act of hewing out a sepulcher in the rock, and in Isa. 30:8 the inscribing of a divine message on a tablet where it might remain "forever and forever" as an imperishable testimony. In Isa. 49:16 Jehovah declares that he has engraved the restored Israel on the palms of his hands, that it might be continually before him. So Job (19:23,24) exclaims,

"Oh that my words were now written !
Oh that they were inscribed in a book !
That with an iron pen and lead
They were graven in the rock for ever !"

From these and similar usages it appears that a *ḥôq* designated the words which were thus engraved in metal or stone, and hence a fixed appointment, an immutable edict or decree proceeding from an established authority. *Hôq* might accordingly designate anything determined by measure, as "bread of my appointment," i. e. a portion which God assigns, Prov. 30:8; Job 23:12, a task given to slaves, Exod. 5:14; the predetermined bounds of human life, Job 15:5; the fixed limits of the sea, Job 26:10; Prov. 8:29. A consuetudinary law is called a *ḥôq* in Israel, Jud. 11:39. The word is chiefly used, however, to designate either a single regulation, or the whole body of theocratic laws imparted to Israel as a revelation of Jehovah's will touching morals, politics, jurisprudence, or religion. Inasmuch as the validity of these ordinances rested on a recognized authority uninfluenced by the fluctuations of public opinion or by royal caprice, they would naturally be designated by a term which, like *ḥôq*, would point to their permanence and stability. Hence the frequent expression "it shall be a statute forever," or "a perpetual statute."

Huqqāh is from the same stem as *ḥôq*, and has the same general meaning. In two instances, 1 Kgs. 3:3; Mic. 6:16, it refers to royal decrees, but in all other instances it refers to statutes or ordinances conceived of as established by divine authority. In a few places, Lev. 18:3,30; 20:23; 2 Kgs. 17:8, it designates heathen customs and practices, but detestable as these were to the minds of

pious Israelites, in the estimate of the heathen themselves they were supposed to rest on the sanction of their deities. The laws of nature called "the ordinances of heaven," Job 38:33; Jer. 33:25, or "of the moon," Jer. 31:35, were regarded as direct expressions of the creative will of Jehovah. In all the remaining ninety-three occurrences of this word it refers directly to those early expressions of divine will which had been communicated to individuals for their personal guidance, as in the case of Abraham, Gen. 26:5, or to those more formal legislative specifications delivered to an acknowledged representative of the nation, as in the case of Moses and the Mosaic code. This was composed of ḥūqqôth, statutes, that could not be changed or repealed except by the Lawgiver himself, nor were the people permitted to make distinctions between the several precepts.

Mîtsvâh commandment.

Both English versions are quite consistent in rendering this word by "commandment." The A. V. in only half a dozen, and the R. V. in a still less number of instances, depart from this rendering, Neh. 10:32(33); Jer. 32:11; 35:18; Dan. 9:5. In the first of these places the word designates certain "ordinances" which the returned Jews made for themselves relative to the support of the temple service, and here the usual rendering would clearly be out of place; in the second, its meaning is uncertain, denoting either the law of contracts, or the specifications contained in a contract; in the third, the variation seems to be required by the laws of euphony, and in the fourth to be entirely arbitrary. The corresponding word in the LXX. is ἐντολή, and in the Vulgate *praeceptum*. Mîtsvâh is from tsāvâh, the root-meaning of which is "to be fast;" (Piel) to make fast, or secure; hence, to order, command. In a few instances mîtsvâh is applied to special royal orders, but everywhere else it designated those direct expressions of Jehovah's will which constituted Israel's law. He had a right to command, and their duty was summed up in prompt and willing obedience.

Mîshmêrêth charge.

The divine law was also Israel's peculiar treasure, that which distinguished and lifted the nation above all other nations in point of religious privilege and enlightenment. So long as the people loyally observed its precepts this law was regarded as a pledge of greater economic prosperity and of more secure defence against enemies than the fabulous wealth and vast armies of neighboring empires. It was the priceless national jewel to be kept and guarded with scrupulous care, not as a thing that Israel had discovered or devised, but as that which Jehovah, their covenant God, had most solemnly entrusted to their guardianship. From this point of view the law was called mîshmêrêth, Lev. 8:35; 18:30; Num. 9:19,23; Deut. 11:1; Mal. 3:14, etc.; it was a charge, i. e. a trust accompanied by specific directions respecting the manner in which it was to be kept and used. More frequently, however, the word referred to the discharge of official duties connected with the care of the sanctuary and with its ritual. "The Levites shall keep the mîshmêrêth of the tabernacle," Num. 1:53; to each of the three leading Levitical families was given the mîshmêrêth, charge, of some designated part of this whole work, Num. 3:25,31,36. At the dedication of the first temple the priests were arranged in ranks according to their several mîshmêrêth, 2 Chron. 7:16.

Mîshpāt judgment.

Like *dîn*, *mîshpāt* also denotes a judicial sentence. It is derived from *shāphāt*, to erect, set upright, and this primary meaning transferred to the administration of justice gives the signification of judging. *Mîshpāt* differs from *dîn* in that it implies a reference to an objective standard of right and equity. The latter is simply a decision handed down by a judge who has it in his power to pervert justice should self-interest or pleasure dictate such a course. A *dîn*, accordingly, may, or may not, be just and equitable. This being the case, we find it used only in a single instance, Ps. 76:8(9), of a divine judicial utterance. *Mîshpāt*, on the contrary, in virtue of its ethical force, always implies a sentence framed with reference to an absolute standard, and hence a just and equitable decision. Because of this moral aspect of *mîshpāt* we find, moreover, that it is quite frequently associated with *ts'dhākāh*, righteousness, the latter being the eternal principle and divine attribute which expresses itself as *mîshpāt* in relation to all forms of conduct. This makes it clear why this word rather than *dîn* was chosen by biblical writers to designate the judicial utterances of Jehovah, since these are universally characterized by conformity to perfect justice. These divine *mîshpātîm*, as declarations of the highest law, intimate also a close connection between obedience and reward, or disobedience and penalty. Jehovah is both the Judge and the Vindicator of his law, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do *mîshpāt*?" Gen. 18:25; i. e. Shall he not pronounce and execute a sentence respecting which there can be no possible suspicion of injustice? Nor does God pervert *mîshpāt*, Deut. 16:19; Job. 8:3, as earthly judges do who turn it into "wormwood" and "gall," Amos 5:7; 6:12.

Throughout Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy *mîshpāt* is most frequently synonymous with *hūqqîm*, statutes, and stands for the entire legislation contained in these books. This signification is also characteristic of the later historical books, of the post-exilic 119th Psalm, and especially of Ezekiel among the prophets. In the earlier prophetic and poetic literature, on the contrary, it usually denotes God's acts of punitive or reformatory judgment. In Judges, Samuel and 2 Kings it is generally used as a designation of religious customs or royal habits.

'ēdhûth testimony.

This is a significant and characteristic designation of the divine law. It is not merely a code determining the rights of persons and things, but a revelation which bears impressive witness to the holy character of God, to his unalterable opposition to sin, and to his displeasure against those who disregard his law. The law was an affirmation of universal and unchangeable principles of religion and morality, and as such became a standing testimony against every apostasy from Jehovah's service, as well as against every violation of personal rights. Throughout the middle books of the Pentateuch *'ēdhûth* is the technical designation of the Decalogue, which was laid up in the ark under the mercy-seat—"the symbol of God's righteous severity against sin being hidden beneath the symbol of his grace and mercy." The Decalogue was the basis of Jehovah's covenant with Israel, and as such occupied the central place in the sanctuary. Other things were named from their proximity to it, as, e. g., the two tables of the testimony, Exod. 31:18; the ark of the testimony, Exod. 30:6; the vail of

the testimony, Lev. 24:3; the tabernacle of the testimony, Exod. 38:21; the congregation before the testimony, Num. 17:4(19), etc. In the plural form, 'ēdh'vōth, this word is used in the later historical books and in the Psalms as a collective designation of the whole body of laws that claimed Jehovah as their author. It was, therefore, interchangeable with "commandments" and "statutes." The title of Ps. 60 presents this word in a connection which, as in the case of most of these titles, is of exceedingly obscure interpretation. "Upon a Lily of the Testimony" suggests that the Psalm was set to a melody associated with these words.

Pīqqūdhim[^] precepts.

A poetic term found exclusively in the Psalms. It occurs twenty-one times in Ps. 119, and only three times in all the rest. The LXX. in seventeen instances renders it ἐντολή, and the Vulgate *praeceptum*; hence the prevailing rendering "precept" in the A. V. The R. V. consistently translates it so in every instance. From the point of view presented in this word, the law is regarded as a system of ethics which, having a divine author, must be infallibly "upright," Ps. 19:8(9), in its exposition of human duty, and eternally "faithful," Ps. 111:7, assuring a realization of the highest good to those in every age and in all circumstances who make its requirements the *norma normans* of life and duty.

Tôrāh[^] law.

The influence of a theory in determining the signification of a word is strikingly shown in the case of tôrāh. The scholarship of only a few years ago, resting on the traditional construction of Israelitish history, asserted quite positively that this word wherever it occurred in the Old Testament, referred to the Mosaic or Pentateuchal code. Now, on the contrary, the critics assure us that in the prophetic writings and in the Psalms, formerly supposed to be replete with references to the Sinaitic legislation, there is but one "absolutely certain reference to the Pentateuch," viz., Mal. 4:4 (Cheyne, Isa., vol. 1:6). In all other instances we must read "instruction" or "prophetic revelation." Of course if the Pentateuchal law, as we know it, did not come into existence until after the exile, the prophets who wrote before that time could not have referred to it, and any apparent references must be interpreted accordingly. The signification of this word in any given place will then be determined entirely by the interpreter's critical bias.

The word itself is derived from the Hiph. of yārāh, to show, teach, and means primarily instruction, doctrine. This meaning was gradually extended into that of authoritative declaration, and this again passed into the sense of law. Tôrāh, even when it came to have this last meaning, was not employed in such a rigidly "juristic sense" as our word law. "But in the theocratic sphere it always applied to a revelation of the divine will in the form of a norm and permanent rule." (Orelli, *O. T. Prophecy*, p. 129.)